

TENEBRAE

A Journal of Poetics

Fathomsun
Press

Edited by Kyle Lovell
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Editorial

Dear reader,

It's been a year since the first issue of *Tenebrae* was published, and quite a bit has changed in terms of the situation we find ourselves in from when I wrote that first editorial. In terms of personal life, I've finished university and am now working to support myself and this press. In terms of the world at large, well. Things are Bad.

What is the point of this journal? It's not just a question of 'what do *I as an individual* want to come from this journal', but what do *we as an ecology of poets* hope to come from it?

It's not difficult for me to recognise that the proposed ideals for *Tenebrae* (a community and collaborative response) were naively hopeful, especially in terms of the material and mental cost within the current economic and political climate. But! That's not to say that we disavow those ideals entirely. Rather, it's a necessary step to recognise the limitations before being able to address them, before we can begin to foster that community.

This past year has left me slightly exhausted and uncertain of a lot, and I recognise that the true potential of this journal will only come about in time, after much discussion and thought and collaboration. Until then, my hope is that *Tenebrae* will embody an all-encompassing and welcoming spirit to the tired and the ill-at-ease. That it will offer a smile between the weary.

Or, in the words of The Mountain Goats; '*Come on in / We haven't slept for weeks / Drink some of this / This'll put color in your cheeks*'¹.

With my love & affection,
Kyle Lovell
Allexton

1. The Mountain Goats, "Color in your Cheeks", *All Hail West Texas*, (Emperor Jones, 2002)

Joe Luna

Aphorisms on Poetry for the Strike*

6th March, 2018

1

Poetry is the durable record of the future ingrained into the present experience of hurt and historical disenfranchisement. The structure of verse contains and expresses the movement of history beyond what is presently possible to write of poetry's *effects*, because effects have the inconvenient tendency to either happen or not, whereas what is effected in poems is not limited to the immediately discernible reaction they may or not elicit in people, but is instead realised according to the historical coordinates of their composition and reception. The questions of contemporary verse practise the understanding of present struggles by subjecting those struggles to the innermost scrutiny of affective resolution, and by doing so they preserve in language – in the intimate shape of common feeling – the conditions of political existence. To write of what is effected in poems built at moments of acute crisis or the threat of social upheaval, far from relatively promoting or relegating such moments beyond or beneath the generalised political crisis of what passes for “the times,” is in fact to recognize crisis itself as the indelible mark of historical transformation, and in turn to transform through the praxis of reading what might otherwise remain latent into the shared acquisition of manifest social knowledge. This is to offer a definition of close reading that treats the object of interpretation as a social fact of historical contingency. It is to refuse the logic of simple cause and effect by representing *effect* as a product of the world poetry swallows and regurgitates the better to savour its taste: *effect* is mathematical, logical, universalised without a second chance; poetry is the promise of non-equivalence in the sound of an equivocal promise. Antithetical to the slick, gilded logic of consumption, poetry sticks in the craw.

* This text was originally published in ‘*Poems in solidarity with the Sussex UCU Pensions strike 2018*’, edited by Mitchel Pass, in March 2018.

2

One way in which poetry generates an extraordinary reserve of critical momentum is by being basically and belligerently unrealistic. Reactionaries always claim that this is a failure of the imagination; or rather, they claim with the syrupy pathos of a broadsheet editor that the poet's eyes are bigger than their stomach, but that nevertheless they provide a hopeful vision (whether visible or invisible) of a future stripped of the qualities of the world from which it emerges. This is bullshit. Hope in poetry is not to be idealised out of existence by cleverly diluting it in the antidote that would cure the poem of its ills, but maintained at the cost of its violent eradication at every turn. Against cynicism, readers should claim the audible communication of hurt as the condition of social truth; against idealism, they should interpret this hurt within the careful proximity of material injustice. Likewise, those that claim that damaged or hurt poetry – that is, poetry marked by crisis – only parades the wounds of the bleeding heart solipsist, betray their own narcissistic image of suffering as something that exists only to be *claimed as one's own*, rather than produced in the contingency of individual composition as a protest against its social organisation. Bad poems are usually bad because they forget this basic fact; the mainstream perpetually misrepresents “protest” as a levelling of the unrealistic against the real, whereas the point is to fashion the unrealistic as a critical weapon against the present terms and conditions upon which reality is conceived and enacted. The recent production of hexes by contemporary poets attests to this fact. Spells are the ironic exaggeration of material powerlessness to effect the justice that material inequality demands. To read them as magic divests them of their social truth. But to believe entirely that social truth snaps shut the eyelet opened by the spell's casting.

3

Nostalgia, like love, is neither inherently radical nor inherently reactionary. The losses of the past, like the losses of the present, need not be recast in the bloody light of pathos or damaged optimism to remain painfully alive and persistent; they can injure the despair of complacent rectitude just as well by refusing to succumb to a happy ending. Love in the poetry of Frank O'Hara, Lisa Robertson, and Keston Sutherland is not the end in futurity of a presently unrealisable affective surplus, any more than it is finally the *same thing* in each of their poetries. But it is possible in each of these cases to discern a passionate optic of desire that motivates, even as it interrogates, the social constitution of desire. This is the recursive critical idiom of the best contemporary love poetry. Recursive does not mean self-destructive: no excoriation of the unlovable subject completely atones for their willed self-importance. But neither can love be abandoned to the scrap-heap of self-indulgence without also abandoning the desire for self-transcendence, the loss of which curses the poet to a paradise of one. During moments of particularly intense social momentum, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the 2010 student movement, the poetry of love acquires a semblance of blank futility, as it reflects beyond catastrophe the solace of intimate conservation. But such desire should also be read as its readiness for adaptation, in the sense that elegy is always also a projection of relational memory. The poetry of those periods is riven with exorbitant, flailing, gratuitous violence, precisely as a means to measure, apperceive, and comprehend the destruction of life that each moment seemed to promise, on their different scales of historical significance and proximity. That response, in all its variety, was a form of loving exactitude enacted on the principles of solidarity with the victims of military and economic violence. What are the forms of love that will make the interruption of the present moment cleave most passionately to the future it drags behind it?

4

Aphorisms are a cop-out. They claim through wilful hermeticism and the dense topography of impacted thought an insight into historical time, especially that of crisis or struggle, protected from the scalpels of the uninitiated by a thick carapace of rhetorical suggestiveness. In this sense they are the exaggerated image of the shibboleth-esque that some read into the contorted lines and ligaments of contemporary radical poetry. Why should we listen to these poets, the argument goes, when they simply will not tell us what they simply mean? The answer to this question is a necessarily aphoristic one: because they have nothing to tell you that you want so desperately to know that you will stop at nothing to have it told. Times like ours present this contradiction in the starkest of terms: you can see it on the picket line, in the contorted lines and ligaments of the face of the scab, in the enormous focus of concentration it takes to ignore an invitation proffered, however clumsily, in the spirit of joyful cooperation. There is no greater ringing endorsement of the primacy of address *to each other* that we make in our poems than the face of the other for whom an invitation can only be heard as an insult. In the face of that narcissistic portcullis, initiation is a field day. And in the moments gathered in the fragile precarity of collective resolution, by the permanent record of beautiful dissent, the day is ours.

Aaron Kent

Herlin-Bamlet

Light water graphite
sarcophagus; pacification
 of red, burns intra
-damp, it is late enough for dusk
 to stain you again,
 you are too young
to shed thyroid – we share bananas
expect to corrode / body heat mummifies
summer, stings fulcrum extension fulcrum.
 I'm twice melatonin;
circadin-bred pensionable sleep
abstinence / swaddle in rock
 armour – dressed
Blayais (
success is not knowing the names
of four bad crows). Curriculum skills
By the light of the silvery moon, a
physicist; I love you calling them 'the
dips' – 'bluebell woods', I 'the resevoir'
 left gleaming backpack
Thursday / legacy box. Approaching.
 I will outlive myself,
 you pipsqueak.

Telescopal

Catholic children sung
 choir of angels raise
degloved flesh at molecular
 confession / miss

like bread without wine
 / resentful sleep
an eddy to hide in as
 sanctuary to rancid

saints / spore reproduction
 lends itself to
law being crushed epi-
 / pen / centre

Sarah Crewe

where

for m.e.s

there is one h in mark e smith
in prestwich in here

with here as a heartland
piscean hypnosis

when creative process is
exorcism adaptation

one h in laugh in shout
in hectoring stage presence

yr town is all methodist
haha whisky crystal

still glossy lampposts ruffled
rustled yr face where where

wohin yr stained glass window&
predilection for amateur teutonics

where is yr pause
laden expectant

paul of tarsus vapour rub
his mother's bed conversion

anticipated in soundchecks
the evangelist the confessor

sci-fi fanboy
blake successor

classical composer
teach us provocation

where is yr sneer
leather strut one glove

how to teach them we are
mystics psychics not sidekicks

disciples grey anarcha-
snitches all history

they write of desire mark, protracted identities, sub*tracted genders. but nobody writes about class, and since you are gone we are now one down.

* sub (strata)

and what are you if not middle class, scum class?

heather, orchestra, 1998.

tadpoles mark, amphibious dots. a treble chef is a distant memory. all cows eat grass. allegedly i am the trio girl. bunches. big mouthed. lip sync for life new order:

sub-culture farringdon pre exhumation post emotion post post! aaaaaahhhhh

the discussion of money is vulgar. your self worth is decimal pointed, dated and amounts to around two hundred euros. propping up a bar is significantly preferable to a non existent chair at an invisible table with a full flush of trivialised socio economic grievances. men who don't work shouldn't bet and women who don't earn money shouldn't gamble.

fragmented mosaics
mixtape ethics collage

a decade nobody said
it was going to be easy

bring us the body bring us the body
guess the ailment spot the hearse

choose the horse wholestone
loadstones subterfuge

betting operations
motown rejection

reversal of structures
cut ups clawed text

empty obsession shone
past tense suspect charity

the body is a body
the body of work is

cadaverous a dead boy
half boy impish

elfin enchanted hortative
incitement exclamation

sell out! cash exploder
fade out! clarivoyant

we see your bar staff trick
tonic immobility

we raise you fanboy fangirl
cheetham hill top deck antics

you obstinate darling you
vanished ascended

light paranoia lavulite
the harsh reality of death&

tweet: *why should we care about a racist old man?*

may all your heroes be without blemish
your staff rooms so inclusive
your poets bloodless &
blameless

we are the fall! & by we you meant you but also us the narrative escapes the author &
ownership of work is
like william wray
preposterous

the misheard lyric in translation have to got to gorra
too much romance & gold here scorpio scorpio
a form of audience

the gradient of dying
eschew suspicion the scoop

to trowel the intertidal
to excavate from floor level

consciously disappearing
innovative nothing in theory

the lament: the aching void
between our legs the sheets

not streets or single file
streaks pink cirrus light

the non existent chair
the invisible table

thank you for letting us
in your security area

the exclusion zone ever tighter
we sit cross lighted politely

to crawl across the
gravel in your voice

they'll read us when we're cold

Danne Jobin

The Studio

Sitting on the sofa, pillows on the floor,
we unwrap clean sustenance from plastic bags
with reverent devotion as the ceremony takes shape
in the precise arrangement of dishes, napkins -

journals open, with scissors and glue
we press our dreams into collages
and watch our fingers pick at
ritual provisions on the central table

then later, the red clocks of our eyes shut down,
we twitch a leg to filter time passing
along the bumpy rhythm
of unpredictable hearts

while light-headed, vision blurred,
thin wraiths rise green in curling swirls
and ashes utter their silent curse
to the fairy song of clanging glass.

Disappearing in turns, we cast bloody spells
with blades or make sacred offerings
of second-hand food
to the toilet bowl

but dusk is calm, understated,
lips the colour of dawn
and our hunger satiated
until our wake is done.

Bradley J. Fest

2015.28

This year I happily submitted to the first person plural, moving from work to flight,¹ becoming better in the still-to-come-tomorrow (if measured by dialogics).² The summer saw the introduction of a new voice, “with quotation marks,” time continued to transform, ironic

metaproceduralism was discovered and geologic finitude explored. Exhausted or ejected were a *particularly* sassy tone and strutting in Louboutins.³ Perhaps a certain mode of anxiety was forgotten, another worked through, and there, stranded up in the scriptorium

at the end of an era, was the pop music of 2005–2015, that nonstop partywagon of climate change black metal dance anthems.⁴ For what *else* could “*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*” mean other than we lack a *Gesamtkunstwerk* beyond this cultural rapture of the nerds?⁵ And

perhaps, at the dawn of a new year, maybe we can do it better. The indexicality of the present must run up against a storage issue
some time, huh?

1. From Britney to will.i.am.

2. Maybe even introducing some optimism here at year’s end.

3. Whose departure I am not mourning.

4. See LMFAO, ft. Lauren Bennet and Goon Rock, “Party Rock Anthem,” *Sorry for Party Rocking* (Santa Monica, CA: Interscope Records, 2011), LP.

5. It does not seem like much else is going on in reality right now.

Tom Snarsky

How to Reterritorialize Writing: a Case Study of Ariana Reines's 'Open Fifths' and Kate Kilalea's 'Hennecker's Ditch'*

A bare fifth, open fifth or empty fifth is a chord containing only a perfect fifth with no third. The closing chords of Pérotin's Viderunt Omnes and Sederunt Principes, Guillaume de Machaut's Messe de Nostre Dame, the Kyrie in Mozart's Requiem, and the first movement of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony are all examples of pieces ending on an open fifth. These chords are common in Medieval music, Sacred Harp singing, and throughout rock music.

— from the Wikipedia page for “Perfect fifth”

All surface water drainage flows captured by the surface water drainage (SWD) networks within the North Olympic Park are disposed to a suitable outfall point either into the Structures, Bridges and Highways (SBH) SWD system, into Hennicker's [sic] Ditch or Channel-sea Culvert or directly into the River Lea via dedicated outfall structures.

— Olympic Park Management & Maintenance Plan

*This paper was originally presented at “Second Annual Boston Area Deleuze Reading Group Conference: Deleuze, Guattari, and Territoriality” in September 2018.

Introduction

In an interview for *The Editorial Magazine*, Fiona Alison Duncan asks Ariana Reines, “Who is the Young-Girl, really?” This query—in reference to Tiquun’s *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*, a text Reines translated for Semiotext(e) in 2012—sets up nicely for an answer grounded in the past, in the “canonical,” in the already-written (and, by extension, the already-translated). Reines’s reply, though, takes an altogether different tack:

I think the real answer to that will be found in the writing that women are doing. It’ll be really interesting in ten years, once a really good amount has accumulated, for us to see. It’s the literature that we produce, and the art that we produce, that will really make our souls. That’s the work that we are in the midst of producing, right now.

Two particularly stunning artifacts of this continual “producing” will occupy us in this essay: Reines’s poem “Open Fifths”, first published at *New York Tyrant* in 2017, and Kate Kilalea’s poem “Hennecker’s Ditch”, first published in the *PN Review* (Issue 195) in 2010.

Each of these poems is a major aesthetic achievement in its own right, but we are particularly interested in reading them as paradigm cases of an approach to poetic practice that follows in the footsteps of some of the most accomplished women and nonbinary poets and writers of the late 20th/early 21st centuries (e.g. Bernadette Mayer, Alice Notley, Fanny Howe, Kathy Acker, Eileen Myles, and many more). This approach is characterized by its openness, its asynchronicity, and its disjunctivity; it is a poetics, primarily, of *listening*—of warm, immanent connection that seeks the liberatory and the artistically fruitful while avoiding (or outright condemning) the totalizing, the domineering, the hierarchical, and the canonical, with all their historical ties to patriarchy and of *speaking* before one has listened to what is really going on. In short, this poetics aims to reconfigure the territory of writing along a feminist axis by scrambling some of its oft-magnified masculinist and high-Modernist signals, and it accomplishes this goal using any and every literary tool available. This is a lot to claim for only two poems, but we hope to bear witness to some of the contours of this poetics in the analysis that follows.

A small disclaimer before we begin: the sole goal of this essay is to tease out (though surely not to fully understand) some of the ways that Reines and Kilalea are preternaturally successful at exploring these modes of openness in their remarkable work; as Kilalea said to Harriet Moore in an interview for *Tender Journal*, the desire to share in some of the magic of these poems is “[l]ike the way that when you love someone, the desired response is for them to return your love, not to ‘understand’ it.” Whatever we fail to understand in this essay, may we at least return in love for these two singular, brilliant, and beautiful poems.

Writing as Connection: the Question of a (New) Feminist Poetic Praxis

Eileen Myles's poem "Writing", from their 2001 book *Skies*, begins thusly:

I can
connect

any two
things

that's
god

This is as concise a statement of the poetics of connection practiced by Kilalea and Reines as we are likely to find! In fact, these lines of Myles's are echoed very closely and expanded upon in Reines's poem, in a stanza crafted with intense care at the line breaks:

It's true what they say, that meaning can be made from anything. The real
Question might be must it & if so how. It's true what the Jews say
That the drawing-together of the two most disparate things is the real
Mark of intelligence. It's true what the Greeks say
That metaphor is transportation.

Three things in this excerpt are worth noting: 1) Reines's allusions strike a careful balance between the conversational and the Christological—cf. St. Paul's Christ collapsing the distinction between Jew and Greek; 2) despite Reines's speaker's conversational tone, the ABAB repetition at the line endings operates as a near-Biblical apparatus of lin(k/e)age; 3) the third line taken on its own, truncated by the line break, puts forth a kind of relational ontology as "the real," tout court. So Reines's poem follows Myles's in holding that one of the most important aspects of writing is the possibility it offers for *connection*—for enacting a relation between two disparate moments, images, or ideas, no matter how different *a priori* their natures might seem to be.

Reines's poem creates these connections between many different milieux, from the speaker's particular settings of utterance (e.g. on a train or in the various museums of NYC) to the songs and musical figures that populate the speaker's referential field (e.g. "Can't Help Falling in Love", Dolly Parton, the members of Pussy Riot and of Sonic Youth, the list goes on), and also to the poets and writers that the speaker chooses from her poetic tradition (e.g. Frank O'Hara (treated sympathetically) and Stéphane Mallarmé (treated less sympathetically, as we will see), along with W.H. Auden, Lord Byron, and even Russell Brand). This set of associations—eclectic, but almost always person-sized, and never too obscure—leads to Reines's speaker acknowledging that "Open Fifths" is "a New [//] York School of Poetry poem":

I haven't read "The Painter
Of Modern Life" in half an age but I told Sheelagh
I'd translate "Correspondences" for the Symbolism
Show at the Frick¹. Good job you have detected this is a New

York School of Poetry poem, for one thing, by the presence
Of the Frick with its Polish Rider so beloved of Frank O'Hara

Reines's speaker cites O'Hara in a self-aware gesture that makes clear that the speaker sees herself performing all this name-dropping in a way that is totally consistent with the chatty, garrulous style of the New York School poets, who frequently mentioned each other in their work (often on a first-name basis, à la Reines's "Sheelagh"). This is a canonical truism; Reines's speaker knows this about the New York School Poets, knows they are "canonical", and also knows that citation is an ineliminable fact of the poem's composition that cannot be avoided:

And I'm going to show it to you when you get here
Even though you've already seen it but like the song
Says, I'll Take You There. [...]

The archival impulse in dudes makes me impatient
But who, who is clean of it.

Reines's poem operates at this person-sized level of association for its duration; it constantly creates space for new allusions, whether to song, art, place, history, politics, poetry, or even to other persons not historically represented in the space of the American lyric poem—e.g., "The bent Peruvian man I met two days ago [/] In his new ice cream shop full of toys". In this sense, Reines's poem is urbane, social, and warmly knowable; reading it is like walking into a party hosted by a friend of a friend who serves as an amicable Virgil figure, at one's side throughout the night and willing both to introduce one around and also to contextualize relationships and relevant backstories in real time. Reines's speaker makes reading the situation possible from within, even for a reader who may not be familiar with everything the poem makes reference to.

In this way, "Open Fifths" addresses the problem of citationality head-on, in very human terms. It prioritizes the first-person experience of canonicity and allusion in an immanent way that feels more like love than secrecy or obscurantism. Jacqueline Risset, as paraphrased here by Richard Sieburth, was writing about Maurice Scève's famous sixteenth-century cycle of dizains, the *Délie*, when she wrote that that work "conflates the act of literary citation with the fantasy of erotic fusion, in the process generating a text that is continually open to available tradition, continually in colloquy with what lies beyond its borders". This description is spot-on perfect for describing what is happening in "Open Fifths"; this is Reines's uptake of Adrienne Rich's project to find a "common

language” — or, perhaps more accurately, a common method—to make space for poetry to speak back to its own totalizing, male-dominated canon.

Kate Kilalea’s poem operates in quite a different register than Reines’s; the person-sized touchstones in “Hennecker’s Ditch” are much more oblique in the text of the poem itself, and the divers sorts of moments and particulars that Kilalea ties together in her poem feel much more obscure at first blush than those in Reines’s poem (read: they are less easily Googleable). In contrast to the Reines bits quoted above, with their dizzying density of proper nouns, here is a representative excerpt from “Hennecker’s Ditch”:

We pushed a chest of drawers against the door.
It’s nice now that the corridor’s empty.
A necklace. Vacant. Light wrecked the road.

*Dear Circus,
We took off our clothes
and did cocaine for three weeks.*

The washing machine shook so badly
that a man asleep four floors down reached out
to hold it:
Shut that dirty little mouth of yours...

The only proper noun in this excerpt, “Circus”, is a chorus-esque figure who only appears in the poem periodically as a kind of epistolary addressee (“Dear Circus...”). (In fact, “Dear Circus” was a provisional title for the poem that Kilalea used for at least one public reading.) The rest of the moments depicted in the excerpt are riddled with opacities: who comprises the rest of the “We” pushing drawers against doors and doing cocaine? What exactly are the mechanics of the sleeping man “four floors down” holding the washing machine? Whence and wherefore the corridor, the necklace, the road?

Introducing “Hennecker’s Ditch” at readings, Kilalea is quite direct in saying that the poem does little to tie together the very disconnected images and moments that feature in it. As Don Share paraphrases,

On YouTube, you can see Kate Kilalea reading ‘Hennecker’s Ditch’—it’s called ‘Dear Circus’ in the video—which she introduces by saying that ‘there’s no work to be done’ by her audience; she adds that one will find in the poem a ‘series of characters and observations without any kind of authorial interpretation, so I’m in the same position as you, and there’s no work to be done, really, but to listen.’ And indeed, the only other explanation of any kind she gives is that ‘it’s worth knowing that the character Henry is a dog.’

The rest of Share's essay is an immanent reading-through of the poem, which he begins by attempting to marshal certain canonical "touchstones" to bolster his reading (e.g. T.S. Eliot who wrote many cryptic longish poems, Marianne Moore whose first book was titled *Observations*, John Berryman whose *Dream Songs* had a Henry as their principal character, and several others). Eventually, though, he has to abandon this approach in favor of a more immanent one:

I push forward, try to let puzzling things pass, but it's hard to do. 'Ickira trecketre stedenenthal', for instance, says the train at her station. How on earth can I resist looking this up? But when I Google the phrase, all I get is... a link to the poem itself, as published in PN Review. I'm now quite distant from my Eliotic and Berrymanesque touchstones; I'm in, let's say, a postmodern place, yet I feel fine. I'm practically in another country, and I like it.

Suddenly Share's subject position as a reader has changed: rather than working as an (Audenesque) metaphysical detective, teasing out allusions and looking for canonical clues, he is reading as a desiring-subject whose ear (in reading) is becoming attuned (however gradually) to the music of the poem. He is now following Kilalea's introductory advice that "there's no work to be done, really, but to listen."

This subject position on the part the reader turns out to be quite close to Kilalea's own subject position, at least vis-à-vis her account of the composition of the poem: "I found myself writing down certain phrases I came across—street signs, snatches of other people's conversation, my own strange inner conversations—in my notebook. There was nothing significant about them but at the time I found them appealing—like an atmosphere my ear had developed a taste for." Kilalea here de-emphasizes the role of the poet as artificer and recasts the poet as a conduit or receiver of the world's complex semiotics, both externally (things and sounds from *outside* the poet's body) and internally (things and sounds from *inside* the poet's head). Suddenly the poet is in almost the same position as the reader, where "there's no work to be done, really, but to listen." The distinction between the poet as craftsperson and the reader as detective begins to collapse; now both poet and reader are *sensemakers* above all else, faced with what William James called the "blooming, buzzing confusion" of experience, listening for something they do not fully understand but that they know intuitively that they find appealing within the space of the poem (whether they're the one putting it there or the one finding it there).

In an interview, Kilalea attributed this shift (which the interviewer likened to being 'set free') to her beginning psychoanalysis and needing a new epistemic baseline, away from the "knowing tone" of the poems in her first book:

KATE: *It's funny that you talk about being 'set free' because that's what it felt like to write it. I remember, after my first collection came out, suddenly looking at the poems I'd written and hating the kind of wise or knowing tone they seemed to have. The idea that I had anything to say about anything seemed totally false, which has something to do with my having started psychoanalysis around that time. The process so drastically undercut the way I'd seen things that not only did I not know anything anymore, I also felt totally incapable of thinking or saying anything that made sense.*

Because of all this, Kilalea's poetics of desire is not driven by the same eroticized citationality as Reines's is. Or, at the very least, that citationality works in a different register for Kilalea than it does for Reines. For example, where Reines might be inclined to mention a song or musician by name or via quotation of lyrics (e.g. "Tex Ritter's singing RIDE RIDE RIDE"), Kilalea is much more likely to let language's own musicality stand in for itself: i.e., "Tckira trecketre stendental, said the train", "*Tick-a-tick-oooh, tick-a-tick-ah*", "A red jersey. Bot bot bot. [/] *Sevéral breezes.*" Prima facie, this feels like it could be a significant difference that might be able to tell us something about the different approaches Reines and Kilalea take to the musicality of poetry; this distinction, though, as with any one might attempt to apply hard and fast to these chimerical poems, eventually breaks down, as when Reines lets us in on her choice of form with the very musical lines, "There are five lines a stanza in here open staves of slave [/] Wheat waving in oppressive Ancient Egypt", or when Kilalea includes a rare proper noun in the lines, "She lay her head against the window and sang a song by Silvio Rodríguez [*sic*] [/] wearing ten gold balls on a chain around her neck." The common denominator for both poets is an irreducible emphasis on sound and listening, a connection we will explore further in the next section.

Although they operate and read in tremendously different ways, we have seen that Reines's and Kilalea's poems establish myriad connections both within the space of the poems themselves and between the poem and a preëxisting literary tradition. Both poems tie together a rich array of experiences, characters, sounds and feelings by way of a semi-deflated poetic subject, who serves less as a supreme artisan/Creator and more as the point of conjuncture of the many diffuse experiences related to the reader in the poem. In the words of Charles Whalley, "the opening lines [of "Hennecker's Ditch"] suggest a heightened exposure to experience, as if the speaker's accustomed perception has been stripped away, leaving them amazed by the rain and the rose beetles, the border around a subjectivity broken and the world rushing in."

In their openness to the world in all its radical particularity, Reines and Kilalea in their poems manage both to enact and to coordinate what Deleuze and Guattari term *haecceities*, as explicated thusly in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.

As poems, “Open Fifths” and “Hennecker’s Ditch” seem especially to cater to this notion of *haecceity*. There is extraordinary scope to both poems’ inclusion of disjoint people, places, things, feelings, sounds, and ideas, tied together only by the perfunctory presence of a poetic “I”; this “I” is not so much a subject as an anaphoric utterance which could eventually develop into a conventional lyric subject, but *doesn’t*, as is sometimes the case in post-L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry. Crucially, the relations (temporal, incidental, disjunctive, and very much real) into which all these things and pre-subjectivities enter in the space of the poems are what constitute the *haecceities* at work therein; as Deleuze and Guattari write, they “consist entirely of relations”.

In the case of Kilalea’s work especially, the pre-subjective “I” is set up quite explicitly to be interrogated, taken down a peg from the crowned position of subjecthood. As Charles Whalley writes, “Voices and characters come and go, change and blur, as the ‘I’ of the first line becomes ‘he,’ ‘she’ and ‘we.’” The reader is prepared for these metamorphoses by the opening of Kilalea’s poem, which announces the dissolution of the “I” in no uncertain terms: “I stood at the station [/] like the pages of a book [/] whose words suddenly start to swim.” If we read the “I” here as being mentioned in addition to being used, we can feel the traditional subject position of lyric poetry slipping away. Here, not only does Kilalea place the “I” in the liminal/functional space of the “station”, but also that “I” gets transposed into a textual register (twice!) and concomitantly destabilized (while, in the same breath, its stability is replaced with the sounds of consonance): “suddenly start to swim”. Like Share’s reading, the poem therefore needs to abandon its conventional lyric “I” in favor of something else—something less fraught, less metaphysically overdetermined, and certainly less mired in the violence of patriarchal history.

New Temporalities: Futurity, Sound, and an Immanent “Faith”

In an article about Denise Riley’s poem “A Part Song”—another beautiful long poem too singularly magnificent to go into here—the poet and critic Ange Mlinko writes that “[a] poet’s medium is time as much as it is language.” For Mlinko, the poet’s art is in creating a kind of *duration* during which the reader’s sense of time chimes in some fundamental way with the poem’s, interrupting the reader’s standard temporal flow by injecting a new, aestheticized kind of experience by way of the contents (aural, imagistic, and otherwise) of the poem.

How does a poet create this sense of temporality from the deflated subject position Reines and Kilalea have carved out for their speakers? One way is by coordinating *singularities* and *refrains* in the poem. Kilalea's poem uses several devices to establish a rhythm, but none more so than raw anaphora: she repeats the figures of the stoep, the sea, and the moon; she repeatedly addresses the mysterious *Dear Circus*; and she frequently makes use of what Charles Whalley calls the "false start", a pattern of repetition that builds tiny micro-structures before moving on—e.g.,

Thirty-one back gardens.
Thirty-one back gardens overlooking
 the backs
of thirty-one houses.
Thirty-one houses looking out over the sea.
And the sea—*of course it was*—was marbled
and contorting.

In Reines's poem the singularities are often people-as-relations; e.g. not Frank O'Hara as some transcendental soul, some metaphysically overdetermined member of the Great Dead Poets Club, but rather Frank O'Hara as depicted naked by Larry Rivers on the cover of one copy of his *Selected Poems*, reduced to a "Long-lost dick" in Reines's lines. (Of course there are exceptions to prove this rule: Reines has plenty of objects that anaphorically create a sense of continuity throughout the poem, from the train cars her speaker inhabits to the peanut butter her speaker eats in the very first stanza, but the mention of Tony Robbins in the opening line of the poem is just one reason to see the personae in Reines's lines as the primary material.)

One way Reines is able to perform this flattening, both of her speaker's subject position and of her vast assortment of references, is the "open fifths" structure of the poem itself. Reines uses number (specifically, the repeated use of the five-line stanza) to ground her speaker's experience and create a level field of composition for the poem. By way of contrast, we can consider Stéphane Mallarmé's use of number, since he is a poet of the masculinist Modern against whom Reines directly polemicalizes in the poem ("he writes I swear to God [!] Badly on purpose") and of whom Quentin Meillassoux has recently offered a well-known reading in *The Number and the Siren*. For Meillassoux's Mallarmé, number is not just a mark of structuration or an organizing principle for the poem: it is the site of the poem's great jumping-over into ontology, into transcendence. It is the way for the poet to both *describe* and *enact* in the same breath; for Meillassoux, Mallarmé performs a tremendous poetic feat in describing the *coup de dés* as unresolved and permanently indeterminate, while also determining a Number in the very act of the poem's articulation, since the poem itself consists of precisely 777 words (by Meillassoux's count). This use of number creates a trajectory or *telos* for the poem that implicitly involves a discontentment with immanence; rather than being-*in* or being-*present*, Mallarmé's speaker must always be *beyond* in order for the poem to properly transcend its conditions of utterance.

For Reines number functions quite differently, and in a much more immanent manner. The “open fifths” allow the speaker to dip into the poem at presumably different moments of subjective time, connecting separate instants via a common structure without thereby attempting to leap out of lived experience into any abstract transcendence:

[...] I'm standing
Up on a crowded train I don't know that I'll be able to finish what I'm saying

Yes I will a man has just offered up his seat.

[...]

My pen she glide so smoothly I can't

Stop.
Actually I could stop and did but now I'm back again

This dipping into and out of the poem across time serves two related purposes. First, it manages again to locate Reines within the New York School poetic tradition: John Ashbery, probably the most esteemed and well-known New York School poet, once described his own poetry as a sort of “underground stream” into which he dipped a bucket in order to bring up a poem, an image he borrowed from an old Austrian novel. Furthermore, the casual temporality throughout Reines's poem also allows her speaker to deflate her references to Mallarmé; he is mentioned by name at both the beginning and the end, but he's not given an extended treatment nor is he taken seriously as an interlocutor—that would defeat the whole purpose of Reines's escape from patriarchal poetic discourse! So Reines's speaker gets to choose her canon: here, the funny and friendly Ashbery over the (for Reines) over-serious and self-important Mallarmé.

Kilalea uses number in a much more stochastic way than Reines does, and this is connected to the different way music works in Kilalea's writing. “Hennecker's Ditch” exhibits minimal numerical regularity: the stanzas are mostly of different lengths (though there are a fair number of tercets), and the numbers mentioned in the poem (“Thirty-one back gardens”, “four floors down”, “three times” or “three weeks”, “ten gold balls”, “A hundred years”) have a similar effect to the numbers placed prominently in shots from David Lynch's recent work: they emanate a specificity that is mysterious in its clarity and boldness; they create an opportunity for the reader to make sense of them in real time, rather than pointing to some ancient or metaphysically-wrought capital-N Number that transcends them all. In fact, Kilalea has written a novel, called *OK, Mr. Field*, in which she describes (in the context of the title character listening to his environment—first to the unpredictable noises of a construction site, then to the sounds of the leaks in his house dripping into metal pots) what it is like to come face-to-face with this seeming randomness in the hopes that it will lead somewhere, that it can be built into something:

My ears, unable to switch off this hope for the resolution the site seemed to be crying out for, were constantly alert for any regularity, believing always that a hammer striking (one, two, three—pause—one, two, three) might be counting the rest of the instruments into rhythm, or that some sonic coincidence, like the scrape of a spade running for a few seconds in parallel to the grating of a drill, signified something more. [...] Where the noises from outside were so irregular that I was constantly being alerted to their presence, the water falling into the pots, tempered as it was by the many layers of roofing and ceiling materials, was so evenly distributed that it had a reliable beat and my mind soon grew accustomed to its presence. The enduringly uniform tempo of the rain dripping into the house provided me with a sense of security. Hearing it, like a baby soothed by a ticking clock, I felt reassured, both of the rhythm's own consistency and of the house's ability to protect me.

This passage returns us to “Hennecker’s Ditch” and its compelling image of the “rickety house” (“*Dear Circus, [/] When you found me [/] I was a rickety house*”), which here is transfigured into the grand mediator between the subject (the “I” of the passage, Mr. Field) and the outside world; to use Charles Whalley’s formulation again, we see how the world is always “rushing in” and the subject (deflated or otherwise) is never cleanly separated from the Outside; rather, it is the mediation of the inside/outside *relation*—in other words, sense itself—that provides the “I” with structure and comfort in the face of a random and terrifying Outside, or what Deleuze has called the *pure exterior*. This makes the listening-*to* that Mr. Field is doing in the passage—which is also, quite clearly, a listening-*for*—into an act of immanent faith in sense, constitutive not only of the reader’s experience (Mr. Field is surely “reading” his surroundings), but also of the poet’s (e.g. Kilalea’s, as she builds the “rickety house” of “Hennecker’s Ditch”—even the titular place of the poem is an outfall point to catch surface water, just like the metal pots in the passage).

It is worth noting that both Reines and Kilalea have branched out into other media to explore the problematics of making sense in the contemporary moment: Kilalea is a poet and novelist trained in architecture, and Reines is a poet, playwright, and performance artist trained in astrology. In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari write: “*out of a chaos of unrelated particulars, paths are selected*” (emphasis in original). The background of each poet informs the path that each traverses in their work: Reines’s path in “Open Fifths” is a sort of *dérive* but in very first-person terms, through a city populated by real people; this being very much in line with Dante and the Orphic tradition, her (admittedly Franco-philic) influences bring to mind Cocteau. Kilalea’s is a somewhat freer sensory *dérive* through language and sound itself, playing more like a Brakhage film or a walk through the rooms of a house than anything with definite narrative weight; this helps to explain both the seriality and the relative brevity of “Hennecker’s Ditch”.

These two poems successfully build their unique temporalities on the back end of what Deleuze and Guattari call the *labor of the refrain*. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari ask quite explicitly whether or not the refrain is “necessarily territorial”, or if it can instead be “used for very subtle deterritorializations, for selective lines of flight”. How better could we describe the liberatory structure of Reines’s “Open Fifths”, or the radical openness to new experience exhibited in Kilalea’s “Hennecker’s Ditch”, than as “the adventure of the refrain: the way music...takes it down a creative line...no origin or end of which is in sight” (ibid.)?

Conclusion

In her film *Morvern Callar*, Lynne Ramsay’s mise-en-scène follows the title character after she wakes up next to her boyfriend who has died by suicide. He leaves her a copy of the finished manuscript for his novel, along with a suggested publisher to send it to. Morvern, in an act not far from Deleuzian “buggery,” puts her own name on the manuscript, sells the novel, and spends the rest of the film continuing to live her life without guilt or shame.

What we get to witness in these two poems by Reines and Kilalea are two poets at the height of their powers deftly navigating the Eliotic Waste Land of a dead canon, in all its Mallarméan sunkenness. Kilalea constructs a “rickety house” out of the sounds and rhythms immanent to the language of the moment of composition, never impinging on them with a superimposed, totalizing architecture; Reines ventriloquizes the dead poets she mentions without ever replicating the patriarchal logic of their Shakespearean quest for a triumphalist, Ozymandian immortality. What Reines and Kilalea achieve instead is what John Ernest called “a life of response, of reception—and the particularity of reception is what the poems reveal, moments of near contact, of instrumentality”. These are poems of what François Laruelle has called the “immanent future”, the fundamental unit of which is lived experience varnished with the attentiveness of the poet, the arch-maker of sense. When we look to the future of poetic practice, we can put ourselves in the position of the beetles that appear in an almost-miraculous concurrence in the second stanzas of both poems, representing both the wonderment of immanence and the possibility for it to be so much more than the sum of its parts through the powerful emanations that comprise the act of creation:

Whorling hurricanes out from the backs of beetles [AR, “OF”]

Wow. The rain. Rose beetles. [KK, “HD”]

At the time of writing, both of these poems are free to read on the internet; I implore you to spend time with these remarkable pieces of work and forge the new connections they possibilize, with a special view toward your own particular circumstances. The promise of a poetics of immanent connection is that we all are potential practitioners, all nodes in the web of a poem without pretense that any of us could dip into at any time, for any reason—or, better: for no reason at all.

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Danielle Hooke Goodbody

A Jack Spicer Exercise

I don't know but everyone
expects us to explain our American-
ness. There is the sea I hear you were born
near, and I too came screaming into the prairie.
Rimbaud would know how these things bleed
into each other. Look, I don't really mind
what Illinois thinks of me now, but I have to
imagine it thinks something, would you agree?
Otherwise, why have I gone on living?
You could be someone else to anyone, but
to me you are Jack, now, and I came a very
long way to find you. Over here, no one knows
we came from different countries.
No one would consider this a translation, but
only we know how greedy we are for blood. Jack,
pull up my chair. There is always baseball in October.
I drink alone because I don't know the names of
your West coast pitchers. Jack, your fingers
were surprisingly long and still warm, and you kissed
your own face and that is why I know it is ok
to speak to the dead. Grow old, Jack
as strong as your ribs. I know your dead land birds
and I bet you never thought you'd be the sky
If this were really a love poem

Mercy

Poor Job, of whom God asked:

*Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook
or tie down its tongue with a rope?*

Maybe I haven't explained that
if it breached in the Channel

I would see it from this window,
dripping moonlight & oil

*Will traders barter for it?
Will they divide it up among the merchants?*

Ctrl + F in the New International
Version. My favourite Bruce

Springsteen song is not exactly
about this, but do you remember

*If you lay a hand on it,
you will remember the struggle*

2012's Death To My Hometown?
'I awoke from a quiet night, I never

heard a sound' We really aren't
roaring in laughter at ourselves

*Iron it treats like straw
and bronze like rotten wood*

reducing everything to God
who is also out there wrestling

with himself and the beast's
final song, moonlight tongue

Will it keep begging you for mercy?

Elinor Cleghorn

Lapsus

Last summer he begged her to let him prune the wisteria.

Two-lipped obtuse she told him *it's a twiner not a gripper*
calyx with the double-limb; inner one bilabiate

That's not a no then, he grinned drawing blades from oilcloth
look, you could see your face in that.

His mouth glimmered but his fingers had no art in them.
I won't hurt it, he said
like it had feelings or something.

Do what you like, she muttered. In the end he did nothing.

Winter now. he never snipped the whippy green so the tendrils labour inwardly.
She can't shut the windows.

Dawn's chill stills her dream-speak. *bilabiate; balba-balba-babble-* trouble talk.
Tongue slips around the Latinate her frigid intonation the dull sting of the mishear.

one night in Autumn as she wiped malt whiskey from the worktop with a cloth that needed
soaking he screamed and *another thing, that bloody plant all it does is strangle*
and come October I'll have to fork out for the someone to unblock the guttering.

the hard *g* pushed all the air out of the room.

Guttering-gutter-guttural-globus-glottal-glossa the words trapped in her throat
held beneath her breath

I feel like I'm talking to myself he sighed.

In the end he left because he couldn't make meaning out of her.

The February morning called for woollens but she'd rather feel it so she went without.
The wisteria, abundant with neglect, lay dormant slipping downward
Absolved of its responsibility to florate but full-heavy with promise.

Come spring she'll bury her face in excessive leaf spill obscuring the blooms
undoing the polite presentation

I'll let it lapse, she thought

like her, it desired an unruly language of its own.

Matutinal pâtisserie

mise en lit in a stream of
consciousness foggy and
dreamy before the warm
stream of shower watering
the skin the stains of man milk
on the fingers in between the
thighs the slept taste of him
in the mouth you think about all
the ingredients for the *mise en
place* as first thing to do in the
morning for proteins still rest
asleep and gluten works finely
at dawn is stirring the dough for
it to grow softly as if it was blown
1 cup of your best wheat flour plus
another cup of whole wheat flour
for a fine melange of colour and
rough smoothness in your pastry
120 grams of butter out of the fridge
cut into small cubes not necessarily
the same size as nature is diverse
and so must be your ingredients
for size is a matter of construct or
taste but nevertheless a strict rule
that works just for science and so
cooking or pastry is more like art or
craft therefore a job with the hands
fresh out the water clean hands

hygiene is also important when cooking as well as cool to cold in temperature hands the same as when moulding clay all soft and still the birds already sing later on you will also need some 3 tablespoons of cold fresh water precisely 3 tablespoons of water just out of the fridge or at room temperature if you don't live in a tropical country for even if it's winter there are no such things as cold days in between these tropics only warm or cool days and the sun on our face suntanning us whilst we watch the boys playing pelada or footvolley barely dressed at the beach in their jiggling dance their cinnamon or olive bodies in their tight speedos sweating and making us sweat and still remember to keep your hands clean and cool for kneading the dough on a smooth surface for working the pastry is comparable to giving a massage or handjob firm and assertive not cold and not too warm for skin and dough are too sensitive thus soft hands precise in their task is best for a good outcome which will soon outpour the fine work your hands

might or might not have done
in the end you'll see if it has grown
if it is swollen and a little elastic
if the gluten relaxed finely and made
it bigger pulsing in its veins
if it throbs when you touch it
if it's humid and about to blow
as pâtisserie is close to alchemy
an infallible spell to bewitch the lover
but remember that instead of the
daily bread or baguette religiously
in your breakfast in the mornings
we are here preparing something
different like the old leek quiche
recipe you got used to make
for occasions when you want to
remember the trip to the baroque
towns in Minas Gerais you went to
when he said you were his twink
his dear tropical boy in that sweet
accent speaking your mother tongue
letting a *te amo* slip through his words
the music of those two simple words
resounding among the mountains
and echoing with the bells tolling
nothing was closer to an epiphany
than the scents and sound of that day
the cheese of that quiche has since
been present in your sensorial memory
its taste and scent an amalgam of
a dreamy joy and an *I love you too*
a glimpse of connection to that moment

but in another place triggered by
the intrinsic mechanics of the senses
as to plotting a breakfast for the lover
whilst he's still in bed asleep and serene
quiet until you have your quiche in
the oven waiting for it to bake
its perfume taking over the place like
in the kids cartoon you used to watch
while you wait and go back to bed
to wake him up with some *cafuné*
as he loves it both the cuddling and
the sound of that word especially
before morning coffee as it rhymes
in your mother tongue *cafuné* and *café*
your grin when he says those words
his accent and you love him even more
but firstly you need to cut the leek
prepare the filling with eggs and the
crème fraîche some dairy food in
the morning as you guys love milk
for daily breakfast religiously when one
of you wakes up and craves for the milk
while the other might still be asleep
it's all about religion when you think
of waking up beside him it's all about
the catholic faith that city is surrounded by
the churches and bells tolling the fog
covering the towers the soapstone
cherubim puerile with their nasty grin
all so baroque from tropical lands
which reminds your grin when he looks
at you and you look at his chiseled body

his curves as if you're a kitten asking for
the morning meal spoiled and sly
yet for this recipe you don't need this
kind of dairy ingredient only the *crème
fraîche* and the cheese which can
be French or from Minas Gerais
for your man loves to be spoiled
and you love to be complimented
and thus cooking works for you
a trick better than reciting poetry
or playing him a song in the guitar
je n'entends plus la guitare neither *moi*
because you don't know how to
play any instruments so you better
cook well to impress it's in the
lover's handbook as cookbooks
are basically a trick to put a spell
on the lover as soon as he tastes
the first slice he'll be yours just
don't forget what's in the oven
don't let it burn and the trick is
done pick the right ingredients
and the rest is alchemy for
pâtisserie is nothing but a trick
medieval witches had given us
for cooking is nothing but art
a spell to start off mornings

Francesca Bratton

Marginalia in Ferrante's *Neapolitan Novels*

Does it ease the unloving? In the margin she had written 'eloquently observed', next to: her whole life a sacrifice to him daily, all that is hers he takes unknowing (he will ruin them). How to master the loneliest alive? The pen slipped with 'I', a space between it and a stop. One slow bracket holds the letter line, and in the back pages endless pencil circles. Such lines, built on erasures. This, a note on a note: 'one doesn't tell the story of an erasure', or take weak paraphrase for a scaffold. Emulations: thirteen drafts (yes, a heavy number), as a memory moves nearer with blue crumbling feathers; the wing-tip dislodges red leaves that fall and thicken mulch that covers roots – the worm of a corrupted idea. Perhaps you excel, perhaps your face appears printed blankly on note pads, home décor, gleaming unthreatening in shop fronts.

Zohar Atkins

An Amicable Goodbye

Because rice is a barricade against
communication

is code

for anti-didacticism

and Latinate words

are sore

from dieting

on Greek alkaloids

of tumeric speech

and loan-sharked silence

why not call me an animal

on your won 800?

We cannot get enough

of ourselves you say

to the chummy pundit

after the hourglass of justice

proves its worth in bubbles

and charts.

Still, conclusions.

Because Being is in the bottom

percentile of performers

it must be let go

with poetry

its only severance package.

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